

CLAY GEERDES **COMIX WAVE** 130
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Acid Man 18 1/2 is $1/stamp from Robert Pasternak, 291 Rupertsland Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2V 0G5. **Acid Man 1-18** are still available from Comix Wave for 50¢/stamp each.

CEREBUS 163 continues Dave Sims' Mothers and Daughters.

Why pay $50 for Madonna's brand of sleaze when **KISS 12** features exquisite erotica from Spain? $10 from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona. Spain. Dave Stevens cover. **El Vibora 152** is also $10. Has the latest gossip on Gilbert Shelton with a recent photo of the Sheltons and the Todds.

HEAD OF STATE

Used to be a thing called *polite society* in which certain things, usually having to do with sex, religion, and politics, weren't mentioned. No more. While the new President, Bill Clinton, was packing up to move into the White House, the whole country could read the intimate details of his sex life in the December **PENTHOUSE**. From Gennifer Flowers' glowing descriptions, it seems the voters picked the right man for the oval orifice. Talk shows we'll never see Department. Bill and Hillary Clinton discussing family values on **Donahue**.

Cacaphonic culture. A friend told me there is a guy at the Marriot Hotel who has a car with a talking alarm. You get too close to the car and it speaks to you, no doubt in a voice like HAL's and tells you to move away from the car. These people with car alarms kill me. What do they do, run in and out of hotels and restaurants every time their beeper tells them someone is near the car? What if they go out there and find a smiling guy waiting for them with a .357 Magnum? Think of it. These days all a smart stick-up man has to do is go over and lean against a Mercedes and wait for his customer to show up. Techno-stupidity.

Would street gangs really fight over the privilege of having sex with an artificial woman? They do in the 8th issue of Guy Colwell's **DOLL**. Erotic theater of the absurd at its best.

A joke I was told the night after the election. "Why didn't Mrs. Perot want Ross to Win?"

"She didn't want to move into a smaller house in a black neighborhood."

Women Roman Polanski claims he had sex with in his biography **ROMAN**.

Carol Lynley
Jill St. John
Michelle Phillips
Sharon Tate
Jacqueline Bisset
Nastassia Kinski [a threesome]

Lloyd Dangle held an interview with Barry St. Vitus which was published in the **KALX** program guide [Fall, 1992]. **KALX** is the official radio station at the University of California in Berkeley. 2311 Bowditch, 94704. St. Vitus says Fantagraphics will be publishing a collection of Dangle's **TROUBLETOWN** in January of '93.

Nina Paley's **SEXISM: THE AWFUL TRUTH.** A black and white mini you can get locally at Comic Relief [Plug!]. Ms. Paley is very good at the short quick jab and her little tale about riding along with a couple of Texas jocks who say things like "if it bleeds, it breeds," should be xeroxed and mailed to any clod you know who has not yet learned that women are people.

The new **BABY SUE** is $2 from POB 1111, Decatur, GA 30031-1111. As acerbic and irreverent as the previous issues. If you're not sick of that little face yet, whatsamatta you?

Joe Bob Briggs has not one but two pictures of Tracy Lords on the cover of the latest **WE ARE THE WEIRD.** Tracy surfaced in a German porny not long ago, but did not look too happy. Does she look any happier in B horror movies? I think Tracy should stand in front of a mirror and practice changing her expression. She might watch some old episodes of **MARRIED WITH CHILDREN** and observe Christina Applegate, but what do I know?

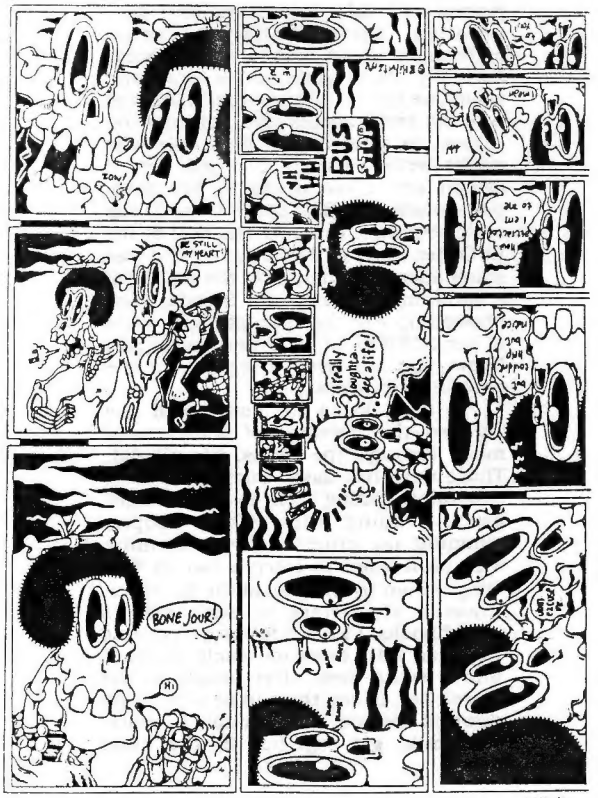
Joe Bob asks who remembers Lenny Bruce. I do, JB. One night my former wife, Shirley, and I were standing outside the Off Broadway in San Francisco's North Beach trying to decide if we really wanted to enter that smoke hole and get hustled for a couple of watery drinks when Lenny Bruce, hard up for a laugh at the moment, started doing a routine on us and the other people ogling the topless dancers on the sign. Bruce was an insulting little prick and I had seen his act from the inside so we passed on him that night, but I did follow his career into the bright night of a heroin OD in L.A. Bruce pioneered the theater of insult which is now simply boring. After all, how could Lenny get much attention in an era when Madonna masturbates onstage and Sinead O'Connor rips up the Pope on National TV?

There's even a picture of the two Quayles in that issue. Now that's real humor. $3 from POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221.

I saw the original of this surrealistic Nancy strip at Wonder Con a couple of years back. It ran in a local tabloid freebie called **FILTH**. The address is 1357-A South Van Ness, San Francisco, CA 94110. They might send you a sample for a couple of bucks, but they might just keep the money and flip you off. The mail is always a gamble, huh?

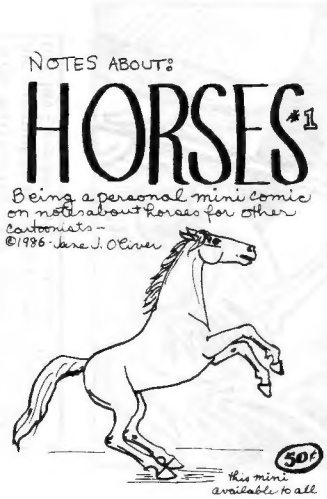






-Hilvitz





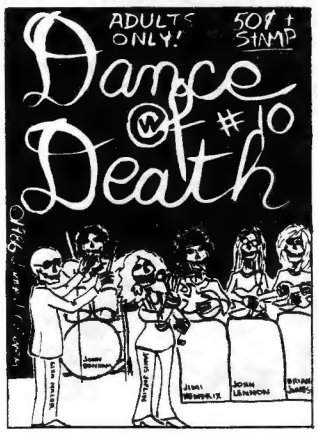


JANE JENKINS OLIVER
[1954-1992]

I met Jane Oliver for the first time at a Peace Festival on the campus of Sonoma State College where I was teaching in the English Department in 1969. She was smiling and friendly and I remember taking a picture of her. We went for a walk and talked, probably about the anti-war movement and a lot of the things that were happening at that time. I left the campus in 1970 and a decade came and went. I worked with Vito's Free Store Theater in Cotati and settled down in Berkeley where I worked on several comic conventions and fairs. I started my newsletter in 1973 and one of my earliest subscribers was none other than Jane Oliver. By the end of the seventies we were into the minicomix, the Newave, and, after a first comic dedicated to the Beatles [**The Beagles Looney Hearts Club**], Jane began to do her regular titles, **PAGAN COMIX, VAMPIRE VIGNETTES**, and **DANCE OF DEATH** as part of the **COMIX WORLD MINI-SERIES**. Jane's alter-ego was a vampire she named Jerry and she began publishing a standard sized comic book about him, **TALES OF JERRY THE STONED VAMPIRE** in 1978. She loved horses and did a minicomic that gave detailed instructions to other cartoonists about how to draw a horse correctly. Jane wrote to me often and asked me how to promote her books and projects and I encouraged her, as I did others, to send copies to people who might write reviews. I urged her to attend any conventions in her area, particularly the San Diego Con. In the early seventies, this con was held at the El Cortez Hotel in San Diego, and it was small enough to maintain the feeling of a gathering of family and friends. Jane showed up with her portfolio and some of her **JERRYS** in 1978 and, as far as I know, she has been a regular for the past fourteen years.

Jane loved the comix and she enjoyed the network of friends she made through the minis. We all did. Those were fun days. Coming up with new titles, getting them into print right away, trading with other people, jamming on projects; hey, jamming with each other in Harry's Bar in San Diego or out by the pool at the El Cortez, drawing characters in each other's sketchbooks. I looked forward to getting together with everyone each Summer and I would keep after people in the newsletter, telling them to be sure to get down to the con. For a couple of years, we would get together in the hotel







restaurant for breakfast and I remember one time when we had about a dozen cartoonists there, all from different parts of the country. Jane was there. Jim Williams came down from Portland. Dave Miller. Brad Foster from Irving, Texas. Those meetings were the culmination of a year of corresponding and drawing. I had urged people to publish their own minis since **COMIX WORLD 24** and the number of titles had become legion. Jane started **VAMPIRE VIGNETTES** in June of 1980, and she had other people sending her panels for **DANCE OF DEATH** by January of 1981. Foster was doing his **GOODIES** series. There would usually be a couple of jam comix done at the cons. Roger May put one together at each con. There was a great deal of cameraderie within the group in those days and strong friendships formed. Some of us went to other cons like Creation or Bay Con and lately we've been getting together at Wonder Con in Oakland. At one, I had the pleasure of seeing Jane's new son, Justin. He was a beautiful little boy, introduced to the world of cartooning almost from birth, because his mother wasn't about to miss a con.

I saw Jane at Wonder Con in 1991 and she told me about her cancer. She was at Wonder Con again this past Spring, sitting there in the artists' alley with her latest issue of **TALES OF JERRY**, smiling and talking to people, drawing little sketches of Jerry in program books. I talked to her for a few minutes, then moved on with the flow of people, not knowing I would not see her again. She died Saturday, August 22, in Sebastopol, California. Born July 7, 1954, in Houston, Texas, Jane got her BFA in Studio Art from Sonoma State College in 1979. She lived with Phil Hirsch with whom she had worked on the band FELIX CULPA.

Always a loyal Beatle fan, Jane had suddenly become interested in Jim Morrison and she had some drawings of him at her table. Perhaps she knew she would be meeting him and John Lennon quite soon. Many of the drawings in her comix seem prophetic right now. Funny, I'm sitting here in Berkeley writing this and I can see Jane in my mind's eye smiling and dancing in the afternoon sunshine up in Sonoma County, not at all the sort of place one would expect to find Jerry the Vampire. Jane was a loving, caring person and I expect many of you who knew her will cherish her memory as I will.

-Clay Geerdes 11/5/92

Dear Clay,

I'd still like to read more about what seems to me to be a shift in your writings about the direction contemporary society is taking. In the early years of **COMIX WORLD**, it seemed to me that you shared the belief that so many of us held--that dramatic change was possible because a new generation (our generation) was emerging that would make the changes by insisting on them. At the time, it seemed that power to effect change came with the belief that one had it. In recent issues of **COMIX WAVE** it seems that you feel society is run by corporations whose control is so strong and so pervasive that it is doubtful that things can be changed. Is that at all a fair characterization of a shift in your writings?

---Jay Kennedy

DEC. 1992 · CW 130 ·

Question is, would Jay have written me the same letter after the major defeat of the Reagan/Bush administration as he did before? And would I have answered it the same or in a different manner? While I am sure my Republican readers are weeping in their beer at this moment, I am equally sure the rest of you are somewhat elated at the end of what has to be one of the lows in American history. Just what we can expect out of the upcoming Razorback White House is anybody's guess, but most of the people I have talked to feel more positive then negative about it. Just the appearance of a couple of handsome younger men on the tube makes an incredible psychological impact on the young of the country. They buried the Bushes over in San Francisco, you know. Nice symbolic funeral with a coffin. Some people carried signs reading HASTA LA VISTA, ASSHOLE! If you've watched Arnie Schwartznegger chumming it up with George Bush on tv, you understand the sign. Big Arnie has come a long way from the FUCK YOU, ASSHOLE! in **TERMINATOR 1** to HASTA LA VISTA, ASSHOLE! In **TERMINATOR 2.**

Jay, I'm twenty years older than I was when I started my newsletter. I was still a street reporter, still a photographer, still getting in people's hair, churning out stories and articles, trying to pay the rent, looking for peace, love, happiness, not at all settled into who and what I was going to be. I remember when Fred Burkhardt was doing his **PORTABLE FANZINE** out of Ohio and I was sending him stuff and refering him to people, so I sent him a piece I did on The Cockettes, a gay theater commune that did mock musicals out in North Beach circa 1969-70. It was just one of the many different things I wrote in those days, one stop on my route, but Crumb saw it and he sent Burkhardt a letter, asking him, "Who is this guy Geerdes, a faggot?" Because, obviously, anyone who writes an article about a gay theater company or drag queens must be gay, huh? Couldn't be that The Cockettes were just a part of the overall underground culture like the Nickelettes or the Underground Cinema out at Presidio or the happenings at Project Artaud or the street theater of the San Francisco Mime Troupe or Zap Comix. Anyway, I got a kick out of that exchange. I hadn't met Crumb at that time. Kept missing him. He was never in Gary Arlington's store when I was out there. The first time I saw him was actually funny, because, you see, I knew what he and his wife, Dana, looked like, but they had no idea what I looked like, so I was eating some of that good roast beef at the US cafe on Columbus and there were Crumb and his wife, Dana, right at the next table, eating just like normal folks. They were talking about music and people they knew that I didn't know and this and that. What a lousy papparazzo, huh? I didn't invade Crumb's dinner, ask a lot of questions, shoot flash pictures of him, embarass his wife--well, what can I say? That just wasn't me. I sort of grinned about the situation, because it was one I had numerous times in my career. Celebrities, you realize, are the visible people, while the rest of us are relatively invisible nonentities.

When you're a celebrity, it's easy to stereotype people. If someone comes around, what does he want? I spent a lot of time around people who thought of themselves as celebrities and typecast me as a groupie. Fact is, I may be a groupie in certain cases, but that was seldom true in the cases where others thought I was. Artist ego is large, even when the artist is only known to a handful of close friends, and I've experienced hauteur from artists I could have cared less about. I've been snubbed by minor actors in little theater productions and treated poorly by directors who thought a lot more of themselves than I did. You understand, most of the time, I was just going along day to day, seeing and enjoying things, reading, writing, taking pictures, making up articles, inventing things to do, chasing women, and for me, one story was as good as another. If one scene started to bore me, I went to another one. I hung around the San Francisco Art Institute a year or so, because I had a good time with George Kuchar and his students. I got a kick out of being in some of their movies and going around the city to different settings. I wrote about that underground film scene because I write about whatever I do or whatever happens to me. I had no ax to grind. I wasn't interested in a career as an actor or filmmaker. Nor was I gay, but I did enjoy hanging around the Palace when the Cockettes were grossing everyone out with their midnight parodies of old Hollywood movies.

As an aside, it was not Crumb who treated me shabbily. When we finally met in 1975, he was quite friendly. He was doing **WEIRDO** then and he expressed an interest in the *Comix Wave Mini-Series* and told me he would run a six page spread on it if I wrote it up and sent it to him. Well, the deal was, I'd get $300 for the six pages and I would split the money up among the artists whose covers were used. I sent the stuff and went on with my work, figuring it would happen when and if. Well, it came out in **WEIRDO 4**, I believe, and it was four pages, not six. Crumb wrote a text of his own. Mine wasn't used. I was paid nothing by Ron Turner, who, I suspect, decided to consider it all promo for my trip. But that wasn't the deal I made with Crumb. Since I had told the various artists whose art was used that there would be some money, I now had the unpleasant task of telling them all that the deal had changed and there would be no money. Not only that, but I couldn't write it up in CW, because I would be calling Crumb a welcher and a lot of the artists were still trying to butter him up so they could get some space in **WEIRDO**.

So, in my estimation, there has been a lot of bad karma in this underground trip. I have not been treated well over the years and it has caused my attitude to shift. I have been ripped off as often by underground companies as I have by overground papers and magazines. Hey, I've been ripped off by luminaries as diverse as Al Goldstein of **SCREW** and the San Francisco **CHRONICLE**. The editor of the pink asked me to do a piece about Dan O'Neill a few years back and I did it, knowing such pieces always pay $35 bucks. I never got my check and I called to ask why out and he had the audacity to tell me over the phone that the paper didn't owe me any money, that the piece was promo. Well, I write a lot of free hype for people in my own newsletter, but not for any megabucks newspaper. I like Dan O'Neill and I've always enjoyed the conversations I've had with him at conventions, but I'm not his agent and I don't write ad copy for him. Burned for $35 bucks. I never spoke to that editor again and we'd known each other for almost twenty years.

To answer your original question, Jay; well, of course this country is run by a handful of multi-national corporations with interlocking directorates and, obviously, those of us who are not mega-billionaires are powerless. We may have a small effect in our own circles, but none internationally. We can't change anything significantly and we never could. I talk to people who try to tell me the anti-war protests ended the war in Viet Nam and it's a waste of breath, because the military-industrial complex which is the economic base of the United States has never stopped being at war with some

third world country somewhere since the days of the "Korean conflict." Just because you don't read about it in the paper or see it on television doesn't mean they're not into it. It only means governmental control over the major media has increased in the past decade to the point where a massacre can be sold to a brainwashed public as a *good war* while the technology used to execute that war is promoted and sold to client countries on the nightly news. Desert Storm was weapons testing at the expense of Iraq just as nuclear testing in the desert was weapons testing at the expense of the Navajo people in the mid-1940's. The whole bloody truth about the current state of capitalism is in ex-Attorney General Ramsey Clark's **THE FIRE THIS TIME.**

You talk about power and change, Jay, but I don't know what this could mean in the context of the way we live in this country. I have no illusions about power. I've always been a working person and when I have had power it has been within a specific context. When I was a college teacher I was told I could select the books I wanted to use in my courses, but that was a lie. I was being tested to see what books I would use and when I used books by writers like John Steinbeck and Richard Wright I was considered a communist. The son of one of the members of the House Un-American Activities Committee actually took my American literature course in order to report on me to his father. After the course was over, he confessed to me. He decided, he said, that I was not a communist. That was in wonderful Fresno back in the mid-sixties when anyone who had graduated from the University of California in Berkeley was considered a dangerous fire-breathing radical. For using Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison in one of my freshman courses, I got raised eyebrows from others on the faculty and some attitudes I considered humorous at the time. A woman told me she had picked up one of my freshman students. He had dropped my class, she said, because 'that Geerdes is teaching nigger literature.' Fact is, I was allowed to choose the books for my sections as long as I chose old standbys like Hemingway and Fitzgerald and Dickens and stayed away from contemporary reality. It being the sixties, I jumped right into whatever was current from acid-rock music at the Fillmore to Ken Kesey's novels. I was censured for using a sociological study of hip culture called **IT'S HAPPENING.** My power as a teacher was a joke. It didn't take me long to realize I was in that position to brainwash young people not to encourage independent thought. In the sixties I fought against the status quo, attacked conformity, advocated making all the waves possible, power to the people, etc.; I was as full of shit as most of my contemporaries. As I watched the news I could see quite clearly that political protest was building a stronger and stronger police state in America. Ronald Reagan got into the presidency by attacking student protest and blabing about law and order. That's the kind of change I saw. I'm still seeing it around Berkeley.

So power and change. I haven't got any power and I don't think I'm going to have much to do with changing anything. I think I have had some influence in the field of comics, but I doubt that it will be recognized until a future time. And comics are fantasy, not reality. You work for King Features, which is the comic strip establishment. Have you got any power? Make any changes? I don't think so. You told me the syndicate gets up to three thousand strip submissions a year and buys about six. When I look at the strips in my local paper, I don't see any changes at all. The new strips are predictable imitations of the old. Gary Trudeau is allowed to be political, but no one else is. Bobby London gets fired for his ideas. Gary Larson has a corner on weirdness. Today's strips are like movies or rock songs or rap--the idea is to do what is already being done, to do what is already successful, to imitate Barbie or Madonna or Clint Eastwood, but your imitation must give the syndicate or studio buyer the illusion of newness and freshness. Orphan Annie in the nineties, a space age Annie. An Eskimo boy and a stuffed polar bear. Calvin and Hobbes in an igloo.

The comic strips I see reflect a pseudo-reality. I'd love to see them changed. None of them reflect the reality of my world. On my street, there are black, Japanese, and white European families. There is a lesbian couple living near the corner and a couple of gay male artists across the street. I live in a multi-cultural, polyglot, multi-racial community and I never see anything like this reflected in the comic strips that run in the Oakland **Tribune**. I don't see the high school or college student community reflected. And don't tell me this is just Berkeley, because I know better. The same kind of communities exist in nearly every major American city in 1992. For a brief time in the early seventies there were underground comic strips drawn by artists like Bobby London and Gary Hallgren and Shary Flenniken and Gilbert Shelton and Dan O'Neill that reflected the reality of our changing subculture, but the best of these were quickly supressed. Zippy was the only underground character to slide into syndication. Why? Perhaps because he confirms the establishment view that anyone who prefers an alternative reality to American business cult is mad. To me, Zippy is a negation, not an affirmation of what was unique to underground comix.

Power? Ross Perot has power. If you can afford those million dollar a minute prime time spots, you can get 19% of the people in this country to vote for you. There were a lot of other candidates for president this year and they were not even mentioned by the network flacks. Change? Perot made a change in American politics. If he decides to maintain his third party organization, it may elect him president in 1996. After all, if you can buy 20% of the voters in a couple of months with a Will Rogers act, you can probably buy all of it in a couple of years. It's all money. In **DEEP COVER**, Levine tells the story of a DEA sting that netted the son of one of the biggest drug dealers in Bolivia. The father made Nixon an offer. He said he would pay *in cash* the National debt of the United States if Nixon would release his son. *And Nixon turned him down!* I love that story. Hey, without that two or three trillion dollar national debt, what would the government use to bribe the population every four years?

To slide back down the ladder to my newsletter. I don't think there has been much of a change in it. I tend to be more honest these days because I'm older and crustier. My early issues were filled with friendly hype and promo for the comix and my middle years did the same thing for another generation of guys with the newave stuff, but behind the ink I thought pretty much as I do now. I'm cynical as hell about politics, national or local. I think the major comic book companies are crass and corrupt to the point of no return--that death of Superman bullshit was beyond the pale and the stores that held back copies to sell at inflated prices a couple of months down the road will have their special place in the lower circles of Dante's Inferno. I think the hot center of comix, located in the Bay Area for a few years in the sixties, is now in Europe where the medium is respected, and it seems logical to me that Shelton and Crumb now spend their time abroad. Crumb was interviewed in the Washington *POST* on May 25, 1992. *The Washington POST, for God's sake.* There is deep meaning there. I was in a Target store the other day and there were two giant counters covered with every possible manifestation of a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle you could imagine. There's deeper meaning.

Berkeley is turning into a mall. The yuppies have won. Some morning I will wake up and find out they have built a Toys 'R' Us around me. I'll have to dig my way out of a pile of naked Barbie dolls and GI Joes before I can have my morning tea. • Clay 12/92